

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

1230 YORK AVENUE - NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021-6399

Joshua Lederberg
UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

May 19, 1994

Hon. Richard Dantzig
Undersecretary of the Navy
Washington DC

Dear Dick:

I enjoyed lunch with you on the 17th, and hope we may expand that to a symposium (i.e. drink and early dinner) in the near future.

Looking over my rough anticipatory notes, and the balance of technical and behaviorally leveraged investments needed, I see that I neglected to bring up one item, namely "clean hands" on our part.

We need to do a more convincing job of persuading both domestic and international constituencies that we are not merely arrogating a monopoly of BW technological capability to ourselves. This is difficult to do as long as we have a) technological supremacy in biomedical science, and b) by necessity some degree of secrecy about BW defensive research. Minimizing the latter is appropriate; but I recommend that be bolstered by establishing some formal inter-agency oversight on the BW-DRP. This could be an advisory board reporting either to OSTP or to the President, with representatives from DoD, DHHS, Intel; perhaps one or two legislators; and importantly two or three biomedical figures outside of government. Its main missions would be to a) be informed about the totality of defense research having any BW implications; b) be reassured that this is published to the maximum degree feasible, or if not, that it can be certified as complying with the BWC in the same measure as we expect from other states; and as an added merit c) to assist in coordinating research and policy planning as between military and civilian capabilities and needs.

Such a board might disarm critics such as those congressmen who have repeatedly demanded the transfer of military biomedical research to the NIH. This would do great danger to support of US research for international health, for which there has been a glorious tradition in the role of the US Army in dealing with, say, yellow fever and malaria.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg

Some possible dates for dinner:


(I'll be in town for:)

June 2 --- NIH - ACD Director

June 28 -- DoD Blue Ribbon panel on BDRP

June 30 -- Risk Assessment Commission

I also have the DSB May 25-26; but I was planning to attend the DSB dinner for Jim Wolsey on the 25th. I'll be presenting the report of the task force on Gulf War Veterans health problems at 1430 on May 25. Main conclusion: no etiological link is established between gulf war exposures and subsequent complaints -- the latter being not unlike what is found in civilian populations and called "chronic fatigue syndrome", for which stress may also be a precipitating cause.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John".

How to forward BW.

17 May 1994

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b) Todo. Behavioral leverage.

Psychosocial barriers.

Don't paint alluring picture.

Firm international posture

Deterrence and retaliation.

Clear heads.

Civilian oversight.

Intel + monitor

Technical prophylaxis

masks, disinfectants

antibiotics Vaccines.

Therapeutic: innovation for viruses

: validation of antibiotics for bacteria

≡ How deal with virus infection generally. Window of vulnerability 20 years